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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 001194

SIPDIS

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FBI FOR DIRECTOR MUELLER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KCRM](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR FBI DIRECTOR MUELLER'S VISIT TO YEMEN

REF: A. SANAA 1078

[B](#). SANAA 1077

[C](#). SANAA 1066

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull, for Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

Introduction

[1](#)1. (S/NF) The Ambassador has briefed President Saleh on your visit. Saleh wishes to meet with you and welcomes the establishment of a LEGATT office in Sanaa. As noted in the 2002 Patterns of Global Terrorism Report, ROYG has provided "excellent cooperation with the U.S." Your visit could hardly be better timed. Having just mounted successful parliamentary elections and weathered the anxieties generated by the war in Iraq, Saleh and his newly formed government are in an upbeat mood as they formulate their agenda for the next two years. CT cooperation with the USG figures prominently in that agenda. Pushing for sustained Yemeni efforts to re-capture Cole suspects and enlisting Saleh's personal support for the LEGATT office should be two primary objectives of this visit.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Yemen Minister of Interior (MOI) Alimi also looks forward to meeting with you during your visit. Alimi has plans for expanding MOI's CT capabilities and has requested the FBI's cooperation and assistance. The other key interlocutor for you here will be General Ghaleb Gamish, head of the Political Security Organization (PSO -- Yemen's intelligence service). Both should be included in your meeting or luncheon with Saleh.

OVERVIEW

[1](#)3. (C) U.S. relations with Yemen, the poorest and most populous nation on the Arabian Peninsula, have improved steadily in recent years. Yemen has made commendable progress in political and economic reform, and internal security.

[1](#)4. (C) Since unification in 1990, Yemen has taken numerous steps to broaden political participation. Yemen was the first country on the Arabian Peninsula to have universal suffrage and the first to have direct presidential elections. Yemen held remarkably peaceful and orderly parliamentary elections on April 27, and a new cabinet has been appointed. The agenda for the new government, which will focus on economic development and security, should be released in early June.

JIBLA TRIAL

[1](#)5. (C) The trial of Abed Abdulrazak Kamel, confessed murderer of three American citizens in Jibla on December 30, 2002, concluded on May 7. Kamel was sentenced to death on May 10. Reports indicate that he intends to appeal. The investigation phase of the trial was marked by excellent FBI support and U.S.-Yemen cooperation, including joint crime scene investigations. FBI and ROYG officials conducted joint interviews with Kamel and all of the witnesses.

USS COLE

[1](#)6. (S/NF) On April 11, ten prisoners, including four individuals implicated in the attack against the USS Cole, escaped from a high-security prison facility in Aden. Following the escape the local PSO Chief and the prison guards in Aden were questioned, roadblocks were set up, and photos of the escapees were carried by major newspapers.

[1](#)7. (S/NF) The re-arrest of the escapees is a matter of the highest priority. President Saleh has assured the Ambassador that the ten will be re-captured. A reward of up to 10

million riyals (USD 54,645) has been offered for information leading to their arrest.

18. (S/NF) Nevertheless, we need to urge continued Yemeni efforts or this campaign will flag. Moreover, if they are recaptured, Saleh will almost certainly move to try Quso and Bedawi quickly. He believes the delay in their trail, at U.S. behest, kept them alive and in less secure confinement.

COUNTERTERRORISM

19. (S/NF) The ROYG has been effective in disrupting terrorist activities inside Yemen, and taken steps to monitor extremist elements. The ROYG is also responsive and effective in providing security for Embassy personnel. It looks to the U.S. for training and financial assistance in accomplishing these tasks.

110. (S/NF) The ROYG has conducted CT operations throughout Yemen to capture key al-Qaida operatives, and has cracked down on religious institutions implicated in breeding extremism, including Dar al-Hadith institute in Marib and Al-Iman University in Sanaa, resulting in the expulsion of foreign students. Yemen is also monitoring its ports of entry for entrants from Iraq and Afghanistan. ROYG has provided excellent support to Embassy security, and intelligence sharing has improved. The Yemenis have also been supportive of our requests for action against terrorist financing sources in Yemen, but this is a field in which bilateral cooperation has been limited.

IRAQ

111. (S/NF) A member of the UN Security Council at the time of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Yemen allied itself with Iraq and voted against the UN resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq during the Gulf War. Yemen suffered greatly. It was marginalized by its Arab neighbors and over a million Yemenis working in Gulf states were sent home. U.S. support for Yemen re-unification after the 1994 civil war provided an opening for improved relations, and the ROYG responded. Yemen has since issued statements consistent with those of the Arab mainstream -- lamenting the suffering of the Iraqi people and opposing long-term U.S. occupation of Iraq -- but stopped short of denouncing the U.S. Saleh's desire to protect relations with the U.S. and the lingering economic impact and isolation caused by the ROYG's foreign policy after the first Gulf War notably softened its opposition to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

REGIONAL ISSUES

112. (C) Yemen has actively attempted to repair damage to its relations with other Gulf states caused by its support for Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War. Yemen has re-established relations with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and the border dispute with Oman has been resolved. Yemen has also settled the dispute with Eritrea over the Hanish Islands (although fishing disputes remain a bilateral irritant), and reached a border agreement with Saudi Arabia.

U.S. ASSISTANCE

113. (S/NF) The USG continues to help Yemen develop its CT capabilities. U.S. Marines are currently training Yemeni security forces in Hodeidah, Sanaa, and Marib; support for Yemen's economic and political development continues; and USAID will re-open in June.

THE EMBASSY

114. (C) Sanaa is no longer on authorized departure, although minor dependents are not permitted at post. Embassy security continues to benefit from ROYG cooperation augmented by structural improvements and personal protective measures.

HULL